tonnes as against the target of 270.0 lakh tonnes. The fall in production of oilseeds is due to severe drought prevailing in major oilseeds growing states in the country.

(c) The quantum of oilseeds produced in Karnataka during the last 3 years is as under:

Year	Production (in 000 tonnes)
1999-2000	1192.5
2000-2001	1538.2
2001-2002	1064.1

Stepping up of Agricultural Loans

2091. DR. A.R. KIDWAI:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a opinion that agriculture loans must be stepped up where liberalisation has opened up new opportunities;

(b) if so, whether Ministry has taken up the issue with banks to provide agricultural loans to the farmers to make it a global competion;

(c) whether the reluctance of commercial banks to offer credit to agricultural sector at lower rates has forced Government to consider a proposal for a separate PLR for the sector; and

(d) if so, what are the other decision Government propose to take to provide funds for agricultural sector to improve the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The banks have been asked from time to time to increase the flow of institutional finance to the farmers.

(c) and (d) To provide credit at reasonable and competitive rates of interest to the agriculture sector. Government of India in its Budget proposals for 2003-04 announced at interest rate band of 2 percent

above and below the Prime Lending Rate (PLR) charged by the commercial banks. Subsequently, public sector banks have been advised to reduce their lending rate for the agriculture sector to a single digit of not more than 9% per annum on loans upto a ceiling of Rs. 50,000/-.

Seeds Regulation Act

2092. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the fact that a faulty provision in the Seeds Regulation Act, 1977 has affected the interests of the farmers throughout the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof:

(c) whether Government have received any representation from the farmers to amend the Act suitably; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) No such Seeds Regulation Act, 1997 has been enacted.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Agricultural production

2093. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to formulate any policy for increasing the Agricultural production in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether agricultural produce is being exported/imported;

(d) if so, the item-wise details thereof; and

(e) what steps are being taken by Government to ban the imports of agricultural products?